

THE PROGRESSIVE  
May 1972

### Duplicity on Vietnam

The comments on "Nixon's Peace Spectacular" in the March *Progressive* were excellent. It is a bit misleading, though, to emphasize that "virtually every item in his plan had previously been proposed by the United States, and all had previously been rejected by the other side." The important point is not that the proposals have all been rejected in recent years; the important point is that nearly every item was *accepted*—by Ho Chi Minh, in 1954. It is our steadfast refusal to observe that agreement that makes it difficult for the Vietnamese to believe us now.

We now offer to repeat some of the promises which we have been ignoring, but repeat them in greatly weakened form, under circumstances which make them worthless.

The Vietnamese are acutely aware, even though we like to forget, that international agreements involving the United States are made meaningless by the activities of the CIA, which operates in complete disregard of international law, specific treaties, declarations of principle, or tradition. In 1954, it violated the Geneva accords as soon as they were signed, by smuggling in tons of prohibited military supplies, sabotaging North Vietnamese railways and bus lines, and hunting down those who had been prominent in the struggle for Vietnamese independence.

At present, the CIA is placing major emphasis on "Operation Phoenix"—a program for subsidizing the assassination of individuals suspected of being part of "the Vietcong infrastructure." On July 19, 1971, William E. Colby, who had directed the program for the CIA, testified that it had killed 20,587 suspects since 1968, and that the program was being stepped up. Presumably, therefore, we have managed to murder at least 30,000 Vietnamese by now.

Since Vietnam is less than one-tenth the size of the United States, this is equivalent to slaughtering more than 300,000 Americans, as far as political impact is concerned. Would Nixon really insist that the 1972 election was a fair one if the Democrats were allowed to assassinate the 300,000 most prominent Republicans before November?

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